

2012 Parks Budget Community Conversations

Table 7 - Summary of Responses
Tuesday, May 3, 2011, Meadowbrook Community Center

Question #2 / #7: What do you think are the Parks Department's core service functions? What are its ancillary service functions?

Core Functions

The Parks Department's core service functions are:

1. ... to provide a wide spectrum of passive and active recreational opportunities for all Seattle residents, regardless of income, neighborhood or social class.
2. ... maintain and take appropriate care of its assets, including physical space (outdoor parks and trails, for example) and physical facilities (buildings, community centers, boat houses, etc.).
3. ... to focus on asset preservation in lean times, so that we can maintain and retain the physical assets we've already invested in.
4. ... to provide park, trail and recreational access to all people in Seattle, regardless of how much money they have.
5. ... to maintain a robust scholarship pool, so that poor people aren't priced out of parks programming.
6. ... to maintain its affordable fee structure, so that families with children can continue to use parks facilities and programs.
7. ... to maintain expenditures which leverage other monies or labor, like the Green Seattle Partnership.
8. ... to provide a place where people can build a sense of community.
9. Everything Parks does is a core service function. This question is unfair!

Ancillary Functions.

The Parks Department's ancillary service functions are:

1. ... developing artificial turf fields and high-tech lighting systems. We should stop doing this during the economic downturn, and put this money into maintaining the parks system.
2. ... routine and non-essential maintenance, like grass cutting, tree trimming and things like that. Parks can reduce the frequency of these things without major effect on the parks system or on asset preservation.

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3. ... providing services and programming. This stuff can be passed off to nonprofits or foundations, and does not need to be conducted by City staff.
4. ... providing trash collection at all parks. We should have a “pack it in / pack it out” system, and eliminate all or most garbage collection.
5. ... maintaining neighborhood-based pocket parks. Focus only on regional or destination parks, and have neighborhoods take care of their own pocket parks.

Other Issues / Items / Comments.

1. Instead of focusing on what we can cut, how about we discuss raising revenues, instead?
2. We need to take another vote of the people, so that we can raid 2008 Parks Levy funds and use them for operational costs.
3. We should not sell tangible assets now, just because times are tough.
4. We should be cautious about privatizing City parks – they may become exclusive and unaffordable.
5. We should focus on expanding strategic non-profit and community partnerships, to preserve services as much as possible.
6. We should promote more volunteerism, like Adopt-a-Park programs, to cut costs and to more actively involve Seattle residents.
7. We should think up some creative fundraising options, like a “Text Message to Donate” program, or like license tab donations, to facilitate people further supporting parks.
8. We should implement metrics management, so that we can quantify how much it costs to serve each person at each Parks program, then cut the ones that are least efficient.
9. Please, no further cuts.
10. We should float and vote on a Metropolitan Parks District.